

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 7-10 and 12 are now present in this application. Claim 7 is independent.

Claims 1-6, 11 and 13-18 have been cancelled and claims 7 and 12 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

II. Drawings

Applicant thanks the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on February 19, 2004.

III. Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 6 due to an informality. In order to overcome this objection, Applicant has cancelled claim 6, thus rendering this objection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has set forth certain instances wherein the claim language lacks antecedent basis or is not clearly understood.

In order to overcome this rejection, Applicant has amended claim 12 to correct each of the deficiencies specifically pointed out by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

V. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being

anticipated by Ruby et al. Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by admitted prior art. Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bradley.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-4 and 6 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

VI. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted prior art in view of Lakin et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5 has been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection under 35

U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bradley in view of Lakin et al. Further, claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bradley in view of Lakin et al. and further in view of Kearns. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

With regard to the rejection of claims 7-10, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of objected-to allowable claim 11, thereby automatically placing independent claim 7 into condition for allowance, along with dependent claims 8-10.

With regard to dependent claims 8-10, Applicant submits that claims 8-10 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 7 which is allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore claims 8-10 are allowable based on their dependence from claim 7. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Claims 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bradley in view of Bradley et al. This rejection is respectfully

traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 13-18 have been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

VII. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As set forth above, the limitations of objected-to claim 11 has been added into independent claim 7, and therefore independent claim 7 should be in condition for allowance. Also, claims 8-10 and 12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 7, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 7, which is believed to be allowable.

VIII. Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

IX. Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone James T. Eller, Jr., Registration No. 39,538, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Application No.: 10/780,713
Art Unit 2826

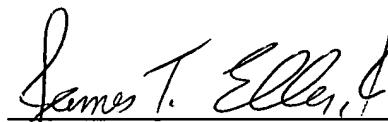
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Amendment filed January 3, 2005
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:



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